

## **Colleagues Praise Congressman Fattah and GEAR UP: *“The best thing since sliced bread.”***

*The House of Representatives, in approving House Resolution 1311, declared July 22, 2008 as National GEAR UP Day in honor of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs . During debate on the Resolution on July 22, here are excerpts of comments from House members about GEAR UP, its effectiveness in their home communities, and about its architect, Congressman Chaka Fattah:*

### **Congressman Tom Davis, R-Virginia:**

“Through these grants and scholarships, underprivileged students are being introduced to a wealth of opportunities otherwise not afforded them. Their experience and educational success serves as a model to their peers and is vital to the health of our communities.

“My kids attended a school, the Glasgow Intermediate School in Alexandria in Fairfax County, where we saw literally dozens of students each year sign up for GEAR UP and improve their academic ratings and potential and go on to college later on as a result of this program. It has made a difference. ... It's as true now as ever that children are our future. And this program provides a significant and valuable step toward providing quality educational opportunities to our underprivileged youth.”

### **Congressman Ruben Hinojosa, D-Texas**

“We are fortunate to have a second generation of GEAR UP programs in south Texas. . . . We will reach over 17,000 students and their families, over 95 percent Hispanic, nearly all economically disadvantaged and the first generation to go to college.

“Today I had the tremendous honor of hosting a GEAR UP delegation of more than 100 parents, students and staff from Region 1 and the University of Texas Pan American.. . . I shared with them the Chaka Fattah story and how he introduced it and how I heard the story and told him I am committed, passionate about education, and I think this is the best thing that has come out since sliced bread, I told Chaka, and I worked hard to get the numbers we needed to pass this.

“I say that Chaka Fattah is absolutely to be known here in Washington and in Congress for the great work he did in making GEAR UP the success story that it is.”

### **Congressman Danny Davis, D-Illinois**

“I rise in strong support of H. Res. 1311, and I want to commend my colleague from Pennsylvania, Representative Chaka Fattah, for his introduction of this legislation....

I have spent, Madam Speaker, practically all of my life engaged with low-income communities, low-income people, low-income students. And I can tell you that I can't think of any legislative enactment that has done more to assist low-income students to experience this commodity that we call higher education.

“And so Representative Fattah, I don't know if you will ever pass another piece of legislation as good as this one. I don't know how much longer you will stay in Congress, but I can tell you one thing, if you never pass another one, you did this one and it is one of the best, one of the most effective, one of the greatest that I have seen, and so I commend you for it.”

### **Congressman Mark Souder, R-Indiana**

“I worked with Congressman Fattah to author GEAR-UP, and it has been a delight to continue to work with him throughout my congressional career to support this important initiative. For example, as part of the ongoing higher education reauthorization, we were recently able to improve the program to encourage more funding for college scholarships.

“So I was very pleased to be able to introduce this bipartisan resolution with the Congressman expressing support for the designation of a National GEAR UP Day.... GEAR UP is an excellent example of the type of program that can make a real difference in kids' lives, but it is also a reminder that tough work lies ahead. I look forward to working with Congressman Fattah and other members on both sides of the aisle to find more solutions to the problems facing these communities.”

### **Congressman Brian Higgins, D-New York**

“Unlike any other Federal program, GEAR UP, through its partnerships, State projects and the thousands of practitioners that carry out its mission, has provided direct services to millions of aspiring students throughout every corner of our country. From tutorial services right here in our Nation's capital to precollege workshops and career fairs held at Buffalo State College in my home State of New York, GEAR UP is telling children that despite your circumstances you too can start early, set high expectations and be prepared to pursue and succeed in post-secondary education.”